

Literature.

Projection and Artistic Drawing, containing the Principles of these useful and elegant Arts; expressly arranged to lead amateurs, artists, surveyors, architects, and civil and military engineers to acquire the practice of all the known Systems of executing the Representation of Objects. Illustrated by Thirty-nine Woodcuts. Price 1s.—Bell & Wood, Fleet-street.

In glancing through this little pamphlet, we were pleased to find so much useful information comprised within so small a compass. In the dedication the author states, "The writer of this pamphlet sends it forth to the public, in hopes that it may induce individuals who have the power, to take such measures as may be the means of leading those around them to acquire a knowledge of the principles and practice of an art which is so generally employed by scientific and practical men in executing representations of the numerous objects that are required by the various classes of every civilized nation."

We need scarce remind the readers of our periodical, that the greater number of the members of the building craft, above all others, ought ever to aim at unravelling the principles, and to acquire the practice of that peculiar art, by which the numerous and invaluable representations of the objects which they have to erect, decorate, and furnish, are executed. The greater number said we? Ought they not all to do so? Undoubtedly, for when the artisans of every craft can furnish working drawings of those things which they are fully competent to design, what rapid progress may we not expect in every branch of trade, and eventually how much of improvement in the public taste.

Some of our readers may be apt to inquire; What! would you really desire artisans to acquire the principles as well as the practice of the art of drawing? We reply—When we speak of the principles of any practical art, the reader generally expects to derive positive information as to the substance or substances whose qualities or relations it is proposed to investigate or operate on. As an example, let any writer desire to explain the principles of optics; here it will become requisite first to define what the term optics signifies; let us assume that it is merely the scientific name of a peculiar branch of study, in which the properties of light are investigated; from this definition we at once perceive that before we can become practical opticians, we must commence or attempt to determine experimentally some of the properties of that subtle and peculiar element which we term light.

From this simple illustration our young readers will learn, that before any scientific term can ever be properly employed, it is requisite that a number of individuals direct their attention to the effects produced amongst or upon objects, by natural or artificial causes; and it is only after a great number of peculiar facts relating to some substances or to some branch of trade or commerce have been recorded, that we ought to think of applying any distinctive term, in order to distinguish it from all other arts.

We say then to all, endeavour to unravel the principles of that peculiar art to which you are directing your attention; by so acting, you will prepare yourselves to enter on and to follow out the practice of it with greater ease and pleasure than you could otherwise do.

With these few preliminary remarks, we beg to direct the reader's attention to the manner in which the author of the pamphlet under consideration has proceeded, in order to lead amateurs, artists, surveyors, &c., to acquire the practice of all the known systems of representing objects. "The Surveyor, by whose skill and ingenuity our lands are measured and their area computed; our roads designed and constructed; those useful channels, which serve as a communication to the various classes of the several districts and counties of our own regal establishment, as well as to the inhabitants of the countries which are parted from us by the deep waters of the ocean." Before these sentiments, however, ought to have been expressed, it becomes requisite that the second class of useful professors, the engineers, be called to exert their inventive powers; but we will not interrupt the author, who asks by

what means it is conceived surveyors, engineers, architects, and artists, are enabled to direct or superintend the construction and execution of their peculiar works? By this simple question he elicits the well-known fact, that it is by acquiring a knowledge of the principles and practice of drawing.

The author then proceeds in an ingenious manner to describe those circumstances which have most probably operated in leading others in bygone days to devise five methods of drawing the representations of every inanimate object, only one of which is applicable in executing drawings of inanimate beings; and after explaining the utility of each of these systems, he proceeds to give suitable scientific terms to distinguish the various methods. Under the first term he claims the four systems of drawing, in which the representations of inanimate objects are executed upon a flat surface according to a given rule; and under the second, that method which artists employ in drawing the representations of inanimate beings, as much as of inanimate things. The first four systems are the orthographic, isometric, military, and perspective methods. The principles of these systems are clearly and explicitly defined in this pamphlet; for although each of these peculiar modes of drawing has from time to time been employed by various practical men, yet the principles of isometric and military projections have never before been defined; but besides defining the principles of four systems of drawing, they are each with much simplicity illustrated by a series of wood-cuts, which will afford pleasure and satisfaction to the minds of the learner.

The author next proceeds to point out the manner by which the practice of those four systems may be acquired, and recommends the study of some of the definitions and theories of Euclid's Elements of Geometry.

Further, the author defines, and afterwards illustrates, the principles of artistic drawing, so that the artist may obtain correct representations of animate and inanimate objects upon a flat surface, which, when viewed from a given position, may present such an appearance as would be derived by viewing the real objects. At this part there seems to want some explicit information in answer to a question on page 6, which is as follows: "By what means are practical artists enabled to execute such representations of objects, as almost present the appearance that is derived by viewing original objects?" We answer, By studying the principles of artistic drawing, they will be led to perceive that they have actually to perform that by habit or skill which may also be accomplished by the rules of art; they will therefore at once commence to practice former sketches, and also in executing others from the real objects; in fact, the student's future progress will in a great measure depend on his own taste and exertions.

To return again to our author, he sketches a very faithful picture of the present mode of educating the rising generation; showing that we spend "the greater part of our childhood and youth in the attempt to acquire information by letters, words, and figures; by such signs as are incompetent to illustrate many of the arts and sciences which are cultivated by some amongst us. And he infers, that "unless individuals acquire the use of that key (a knowledge of the various systems of projections), by which alone the door can be opened, which will lead them into such channels as will enable them to acquire a knowledge of many arts and sciences, that neither men of science or scientific pursuits, will ever be appreciated by the public."

As the greater number of objects in existence are contained under plain, cylindrical, conical, spherical, or irregular surfaces, students will very soon determine that the representations of all objects must consist of a combination of straight, circular, elliptical, or other curved lines; this fact should be sufficient to induce them to acquire the method of forming such with great freedom of hand, without any assistance from mathematical instruments; they will then be fully prepared to direct their efforts in sketching views of those objects which attract their attention; and after having acquired considerable facility in sketching the outlines of objects from recollection, they should learn the

use of colours, with the mode of handling the necessary tools; when they may further try their powers in finishing them.

We cannot close our remarks on this pamphlet without recording our opinion as to its merits, and we freely own that we feel persuaded that it will continue from this time forward to hold a place in the estimation of those who care for the principles of the art of drawing with the simple and ingenious pamphlet written by the celebrated Dr. Brook Taylor, there are few who are aware in what a confused and irregular manner the principles of perspective were made known previously to the light which he brought to bear on the subject. We therefore trust that the young artisans of every craft will avail themselves of such a useful pamphlet as that under consideration.

Suggestions for the Improvement of our Towns and Houses. By Lieut. MASEN. London. Smith, Elder, and Co.

This is the work of an enthusiastic, right-minded Englishman, anxious for the improvement of the condition of his countrymen in every sense, but more particularly, as the title of the work denotes, in respect of the arrangement and character of their dwellings. It is from this sort of appeal to public attention, and from the evidence which it furnishes of deep reflection in the minds of many, that we confidently rely for the obtaining the good that is sought, more than from all the enactments and laws under the head of building acts, be they ever so carefully and comprehensively devised. The public mind must have its training, and the legislature must follow that training in active progress; and it is not a little strange that, like all other systems of training, the schoolmaster must come from abroad. It may be, however, that architects and builders have been too little consulted on any subject but the mere technicalities of their calling. Employers too generally chalk out their own plans, and merely refer to the Architect to put them into "shape," as it is termed,—which is much the same as for them to send to a doctor to make up a prescription to their order, and not to give one. This obscure state of matters is coming to an end: the architect and the builder, roused by the taunts and objections of non-professional men, will learn to understand their true province in time,—they must take the initiation, and not only say how houses should be built, but where they should be built, and what should be the accessories to them.

One would think that Mr. Masen had had to do with Lord Lincoln's Building Act, so pointed is the coincidence between certain provisions of that bill and the oburgations of the book. Let any one read this extract of the Preface, and compare it with the clause of the proposed act, and he will see what we mean:

"It used to be very generally remarked, a few years ago, that most new houses were run up in an incredibly short time, with walls, joists, and rafters most dangerously thin and slight; the consequence was, as might have been expected, many accidents occurred from the falling in of walls and floors. I remember about twenty years ago, one or two whole rows of new houses were blown down by a gust of wind, as completely as an edifice raised by a child with a pack of cards. I am not sure that a building law has not been enacted since then, which put a stop to such gingerbread houses; but I still consider the style of building much too slight, both in walling and in timber; moreover, the builders are most unnecessarily stingy in space, half the rooms in the kingdom not being large enough to swing a cat in."

There is another extract which we will make, on account of its force and justice, and conclude for the present:

"Numerous small plots of open ground around every town are already marked out for building upon, and the plans of streets already traced, with the utmost ingenuity, so as to crowd as many little streets, and build as many little houses, without an inch of garden, as it is possible to buddle together; the streets so narrow and devoid of plan, as to render impracticable any system of sewerage or drainage. The legislature would do well to pass a temporary enactment to prevent all these narrow lines of intended houses from being proceeded with, rather than, by suffering them to be thus built, inevitably incur increased trouble and expense in their after-cleansing and draining; at the same time to cause all the plans to be traced anew, with a little more judgment, and also enact some control over the covetousness of private parties."